Conversion of Sholapur-Gadag Railway Line

1386. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the gauge conversion work between Sholapur to Gadag via Bijapur is in progress, if so, by when it is likely to be completed; and

(b) whether the gauge conversion work is in progess from both Sholapur and Gadag sides?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) yes, Sir, Sholapur-Bijapur is expected to be completed in the current financial year and Bijapur-Gadag by December, 1998.

(b) Work is in progress between Sholapur and Bijapur. Work would be taken up on the rest of the section shortly.

Reviewing of approved railway projects

1387. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after some railway projects were approved by Parliament, the projects were subjected to bureaucratic and cabinet Scrutiny;

(b) if so, in how many cases the railway projects approved by Parliament were later scrutinised and cleared by Railway Board during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96; and

(c) what are the reasons for reviewing the approved projects and whether it attracts any breach of previlege?

THE MINISTER OF IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Prior to 1.3.94, Ministry of Railways approved all new Railway Projects after clearance of the Planning commission under plan-head 'New lines', 'Gauge conversion', 'MTP' and 'Railway Electrification'. Later on, a new procedure of scrutinising new railway projects-costing Rs. 50 crore and above, was adopted following a decision of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs/under which all such new projects, are to be scrutinise by an Expanded Board followed by approval of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.

(b) Owing to persistent demand from MPs, certain works were included in the Budget, and it was clarified in the Budget Speech that these works would be taken up after obtaining the necessary clearan ces. These works were as under:

1993-94 Gauge Conversion of:

1. Miraj- Latur
2. Sholapur- Gadag

1994-95 Udhampur-Srinagar New Railway Line.

1995-96 1. Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli Vaijnath New line.

2. Extn. of scope of Udhampur-Srinagar new line to Udampur-Srinagar-Baramulla.
3. Kottur- Harihar new line.
4. Dallirajahara-Jagdalpur new line.
5. Gauge Conversion of Mysore-Hassan.
6. Gauge Conversion of Yesh-wantpur-Salem
7. Gauge Conversion of Tirchy-Nagore-Karaikal.
8. Gauge Conversion of Gandhidham-Bhuj.
9. Gauge Conversion of Mathura-Achnera.

(c) Approval of the projects requires prior clearance by Planning commission Expanded Board and CCEA. The above works were included in the Budget in anticipation of these clearances so that the works could be taken up as soon as the clearances were received. Thus the objective was only to expedite the im plementation of the projects requested by the Hon'ble MPs. It is thus submitted that these do not constitute breach of privilege.